7 or 8
$$\xrightarrow{a}$$
 H_3CO CH_3 H_3CO H_3CO H_3CO H_3CO H_3CO H_3 H_3CO H_3 H_3 H_3 H_3 H_3 H_4 H_4 H_5 H_5

$$R^{2}O \longrightarrow R^{1} \longrightarrow R^{2}O \longrightarrow R^{1} \longrightarrow R^{1} \longrightarrow R^{2}O \longrightarrow R^{1} \longrightarrow$$